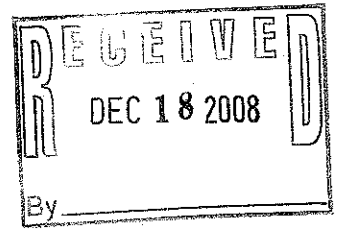




AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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December 9, 2008

Commissioner Susan A. Gendron
Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

Board of Education

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On behalf of the Georgetown School Committee, I'd like to take this opportunity to update you concerning its efforts to find a School Consolidation Partner.

Throughout school year 2007-2008, the Georgetown School Committee, accompanied by then Superintendent Shuttleworth, approached every community contiguous to Georgetown and some that were not to explore the possibility of consolidating the two school systems. Among those considered for partnering with Georgetown were the school systems of SAD75, Lisbon, RSU1, Wiscasset, and those communities looking to form the Sheepscot Valley Consolidated School District. We also had conversations with our friends across the river, including Southport and Boothbay Harbor. Unfortunately, all of the aforementioned communities were not interested in partnering with Georgetown for a myriad of reasons.

At the end of the 2007-2008 school year, understanding that we would be a stand-alone School Department, we solicited a Request for Proposals for central office services. We made additional overtures to RSU1 to ask if they would consider contracting with us to provide Administrative and Business Office Services. We received two proposals – one from the Augusta School Department and one from Terry Despres, the Superintendent in MSAD36.

From RSU1, we received a letter indicating quite understandably that, given their new status as an RSU, they felt unable to take on additional obligations at this time.

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From the two proposals we received, we selected the Augusta School Department's and have been working with them on a transition from Union 47 to a contractual arrangement with the Augusta School Department that formally started in July of 2008. Prior to this transition taking place, we worked closely with outgoing Superintendent Mr. Shuttleworth and members of the Union 47 Central Office staff to insure an accurate and timely transfer of records and to minimize disruption to students and staff.

From my perspective as the Superintendent of this unusual relationship, it has gone extremely well. That being said, the reason the transition has gone as well as it has is because of the goodwill and hard work of the individuals involved. Notably, the Principal and the Secretary at Georgetown Central School have stepped up and picked up some of the duties formerly performed by a Central Office.

As part of my responsibilities as the new Georgetown Superintendent of School, I have approached communities, again, including Brunswick and SAD 75, about partnering with Georgetown in a consolidated School Department. I also talked with Lisbon and Lisbon Falls/Durham. The response I've received is that these communities now have an approved Alternative Plan and are no longer pursuing consolidation with others.

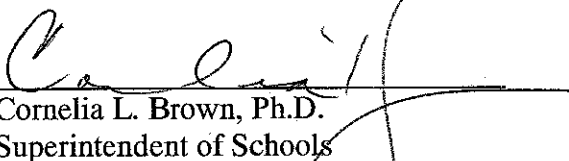
The relationship with the Augusta School Department proves to be beneficial for both parties. In Augusta, the School Department is saving administrative costs. In Georgetown, we've been able to maintain our School, our School Board, authority over our teachers, and control of the education of our students. Georgetown students continue to perform at very high levels on the Maine Education Assessment, graduate at the top of their class, and attend prestigious Post-Secondary schools. We are very proud of the students in Georgetown, and their accomplishments flatter our community. Students have traditionally received an excellent education at the Georgetown Central School and continue to do so under this new arrangement.

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At this time, we implore you not to penalize our community and, subsequently, our students for a failure to consolidate. As we have previously pointed out in correspondence to you from our legal counsel, we do not believe that the penalty provisions of the School Consolidation Law are applicable because Georgetown voted pursuant to LD 910, a statute that does not contain penalties. In addition to our legal arguments, we believe that an exceptionally strong equitable case can be made. We have done our level best to consolidate with our neighbors and now successfully demonstrate that we can stand on our own as an independent School Department using a collaborative, creative, and cost efficient model for providing a first-class education. It is unreasonable and unjust to penalize a small fishing community like Georgetown with a substantial loss of funding when it is incontrovertible that the community has done everything within its power to comply with the requirements of the School Consolidation Law.

In closing, I believe we make a convincing equity argument to you and look for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,



Cornelia L. Brown, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Nina Roth-Wells
Chair – Georgetown School Committee

CLB/gih